



*You are kindly invited to participate in-person or online in the*

## **Global People's Assembly**

from 17-18 September 2023 in New York

and the session on

## **Global Democracy and the UN**

on 18 September 2023, 11.00-12.30 EDT

The Global People's Assembly (GPA), convened by Global Call To Action Against Poverty and co-organized by over 50 civil society groups, serves as a platform for the voice of the people while government leaders meet at the UN in New York. The 2023 assembly will take place opposite the UN and online during the high-level week of the UN General Assembly and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) summit. The full program that features numerous sessions is available at [peoplesassembly.global](https://peoplesassembly.global).

The UN is the most important body for international collaboration but there are few, if any, means for citizens, elected representatives or civil society to influence or take part in its deliberations, even less its decision-making. This session continues a process of reflection and mobilization on improving participation and representation at the UN. It will be action-oriented and focus on how to advance specific proposals, in particular such that were endorsed by previous GPAs and/or other platforms such as the [Global Futures Forum](#) (GFF) or the "[We The Peoples](#)" campaign for inclusive global governance. In view of a global trend of rising authoritarianism, the UN's role in advancing democracy will also be considered.

### **Session program**

#### Introduction and moderation

Rita Kakati Shah (Democracy Without Borders and UMA)

#### Overview of proposals and context

- UN World Citizens' Initiative, UN Parliamentary Assembly, UN Special Rapporteur on Democracy, Nudhara Yusuf (GGIN & Stimson Center)
- UN Civil Society Envoy (Mandeep Tiwana, CIVICUS)
- Context: GFF, Summit of the Future & SDG 16 (Jeffery Huffines, C4UN)

#### Interactive discussion

#### Conclusions

The session is co-organized by Democracy Without Borders, Coalition for the UN We Need (C4UN), CIVICUS, Democracy International, TAP Network and The Millennials Movement.

### **Registration**

[Register for the GPA here to attend this session](#)



**Global People's Assembly**  
**Session on Global Democracy and the UN**  
18 September 2023

**A. Summary of selected proposals**

Proposals 1-3 concern participation and representation at the UN. They have been endorsed by previous GPAs and/or in the 2023 Interim People's Pact for the Future as well as by the "We The Peoples" campaign for inclusive global governance, among others. Proposal 4 concerns advancing democracy through the UN.

**1. UN World Citizens' Initiative**

This participatory mechanism will provide citizens with a formal way to present proposals to the UN's main bodies. A group of citizens from different world regions could register a proposal at the UN. If this proposal manages to receive a certain threshold of global support from individual citizens within a given time and from across world regions, collected via an online platform and in-person, it would qualify for submission either to the UN General Assembly (UNGA) or the UN Security Council. They would then be required to consider and vote on the submission or a revised version. The instrument can be set up by the UNGA.

Deep-dive study:

<https://tinyurl.com/UNWCIstudy>

**2. UN Parliamentary Assembly**

A UN Parliamentary Assembly (UNPA) would give elected representatives, who reflect a broader political spectrum than the executive branches of UN member states, a formal voice at the UN. A UNPA can be established by a majority vote of the UNGA as a subsidiary body using Article 22 of the UN Charter. Through portfolio committees and transnational groups set up by its members, the UNPA can conduct public hearings and deliberations and merge their findings in plenary resolutions. A UNPA would act as a voice of the world's citizens and serve as a catalyst for policies and proposals on further UN and global governance reforms.

Deep-dive study:

<https://tinyurl.com/UNPAstudy>

**3. UN Civil Society Envoy**

The UN Civil Society Envoy would be a senior staff position at the UN at the level of Under Secretary-General or Assistant Secretary-General appointed by the UN Secretary-General. This envoy and his office would be a focal point for coordinating, improving, and facilitating civil society access to the UN. The envoy should champion the implementation of a strategy for opening up the UN to a broader, more diverse and representative cross-section of civil society beyond NGOs that are present at the UN in New York and Geneva.

Deep-dive study:

<https://tinyurl.com/UNCSEstudy>

#### **4. UN Special Rapporteur on Democracy**

Building on numerous resolutions adopted by the UN, in past and present, stressing its commitment to advancing democracy and democratic principles, a UN Special Rapporteur on Democracy (UNRod) would examine the state of democracy in the world, working closely with civil society, experts and relevant stakeholders. The rapporteur will share observations on shortcomings but also on best practices and offer recommendations for improvement. The mandate would be established by the UN Human Rights Council and provide regular reports to the council as well as the UN General Assembly.

Deep-dive study:

<https://tinyurl.com/UNRODstudy>.

### **B. Possible action**

For each of the proposals, civil society campaigns and platforms exist that are moving them forward. Their objective is to mobilize civil society, experts, parliamentarians and the public at large in order to build government support.

Action that you can take as an individual and/or as an institution includes:

- Express your support by endorsing existing campaigns:
  - <https://www.wethepeoples.org/>
  - <https://www.unpacampaign.org/>
- Approach like-minded partner organizations and ask them to endorse as well
- Approach members of parliament in the countries you operate in or in your constituency and ask them to endorse
- Write a letter to your foreign minister and other government officials asking them to support the proposals at the UN
- Include advocacy of global democracy in your organization's mandate and connect this to your causes
- Organize local meetings and events to discuss the proposals